

UK AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

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Sceptical of biotech until involved with the UK field evaluation trials, at the end of three years I understood the benefits but also the way the media is manipulated putting equal weight on subjective arguments to scientific ones.

My European work exposed me to all the political complications of the EU and the resistance to adoption that totally ignored science, EFSA and the reality of market import requirements. Romania being the simplest example of a country adopting GM soya, producing an exportable surplus, joining the EU, then loosing the crop and is now having to import soya.

My travelling has shown me both adoption and the huge investment that private companies are putting into the sector. It has lead me to the obvious conclusion that genetics are probably the single most important key to both sustainability and food security. GM has a global role that the EU seems determined to ignore but consume through necessity.

As a European farmer I am reliant on technology and yet deprived of the GM choice and feel increasingly left behind. Only small limited trials are taking place, R & D is leaving the EU and the developments seen across various continents will place EU farming in both a far less competitive place or able to fulfil their role in global food security.

I realise GM doesn't offer every solution just part but as a simple practical example of the future key it offers I use nitrogen. Plants can fix nitrogen and GM is the only potential route to move those genetics. Omega 3 oil is a key but expensive part of a diet, GM is the only route to provide it to all consumers far more sustainably than the world's fish stocks are managed.

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Biotechnology in the UK

David Hill

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History

Politics

Future

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